Import of Shells for Bofors Guns

† 2502. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have been importing the shells for the Bofors Guns till recently;

(b) whether Government have now decided to manufacture these shells for the Bofors guns in the country itself;

(c) if so, when its manufacturing would be started; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) The 155mm ammunition used with FH 77B Gun System is indigenously manufactured by the Ordnance Factories and its import is ordinarily not undertaken if the capacities of the Ordnance Factories and the requirement of Army match. Certain varieties of superior 155mm ammunition have recently been imported, where indigenous capability was yet to be established or where the Army's requirement of the ammunition was more than the production capacity of the Ordnance Factories. In the case of import of ammunition with superior technology, Transfer of Technology is also obtained to enable the Ordance Factories to adopt the latest technology for subsequent indigenous production.

Missile Programme

2503. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the missile programme of "Durga" has been shelved;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has better missiles than India; and

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.